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ZNR UUUUU ZZH
P 040727Z FEB 10
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8867
INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHZN/ENVIRONMENT SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COLLECTIVE

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ACCRA 000107

DEPARTMENT FOR S/SECC, OES/PCI AND AF/W

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SENV](#) [KGHG](#) [ENRG](#) [EAID](#) [GH](#)
SUBJECT: GHANA PROPOSES ENVOY TO ENLIST SUPPORT FOR COPENHAGEN
CLIMATE ACCORD

REFS: A. STATE 3079
[1](#)B. 09 ACCRA 1288
[1](#)C. ACCRA 84

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[1](#)1. (SBU) SUMMARY: In a meeting with the Ambassador on January 29, Ghana's Environment, Science and Technology Minister, Sherry Ayittey, said that the Copenhagen Climate Change Accord enjoyed widespread support among African states, but some were confused about how to associate under the Accord's opt-in procedures. She predicted that the vast majority of African states would associate with the Accord by mid-2010, but suggested that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat could help speed up the process by appointing a special envoy -- Kofi Annan for example -- to make the rounds of African states and enlist support for the Accord. The Minister also shared with the Ambassador the investigation report on the Newmont Gold Mining Corporation's chemical spill (Ref C), and the ministry's desire to establish science libraries in Ghana. END SUMMARY.

Africa Group on Board With Accord

[1](#)2. (SBU) In a meeting with Ghanaian Environment, Science and Technology Minister Sherry Ayittey on January 29, the Ambassador thanked the minister for Ghana's vocal support for the Copenhagen Climate Change Accord and quick association with the Accord (on January 13), and briefed her on the U.S. association and inscription of an emissions reduction target on January 28. The Ambassador also urged Ghana to take a leading regional role by urging other African states to associate with the Accord.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Highlighting Ghana's recent association with the Copenhagen Accord, Minister Ayittey shared with the Ambassador a copy of Ghana's proposed "Low Carbon Growth Plan" that the ministry had prepared with the assistance of the McKinsey & Company consulting firm. She noted that Ghana intended to inscribe a list of specific climate change actions with the UN Climate Change Secretariat consistent with the low carbon growth plan.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Turning to the broader situation within the Africa Group, Minister Ayittey noted that most African states were in favor of the Accord, and like Ghana, were attracted to the Accord's pledges of climate change mitigation and adaptation assistance for Africa and the least developed countries. In particular, the Accord's provisions on technology transfer in the areas of climate change and renewable energy fit well with on-going efforts to foster broader collaboration on science and technology issues within Africa, to get African countries to include science and technology development in their national budgets, and the recent creation of a Climate Change Office at the AU Headquarters in Addis Ababa.

15. (SBU) However, the association and opt-in procedures of the Accord were confusing to some countries, Minister Ayittey noted, while bureaucratic delays in others meant that foreign ministries had been slow to share information with the "sector ministries" that have the lead role on questions of climate change and the environment. She predicted that by mid-2010, the vast majority of African states would associate with the Accord, but the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change Secretariat could speed up the process by appointing an envoy to make the rounds of African states and drum up support for the Accord. In that regard, she suggested that former UNSYG Kofi Annan, a vocal advocate on issues of climate justice, would be a good choice, and would be supported not only by Ghana, but also by AMCEN (the African Ministerial Conference on the Environment).

Newmont Chemical Spill

16. (SBU) Minister Ayittey shared a copy of the GOG report from the recently completed investigation of the chemical spill at the Newmont Gold Mining Corporation's Ahafo gold mine, which led to the imposition of a \$5 million compensation penalty on Newmont (REF C). She said that the investigation had been fair and transparent. Newmont executives had recently met with her and repeated their objections to the report's conclusion that the company had initially attempted to "cover up" the incident. She had told the company that they were free to take a reservation or lodge an objection to that particular conclusion.

17. (SBU) The Ambassador noted that Newmont had publicly stated its desire to be a good corporate citizen in Ghana, conceded it had poorly responded to the chemical spill, and intended to pay the \$5

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million penalty. The Ambassador also noted that artisanal gold miners in Ghana appeared to be causing environmental damage and were poisoning lands and bodies of water where they operated. Minister Ayittey agreed that artisanal miners had a big impact on the environment and public health, and they should be organized, licensed and regulated. She said that she would be touring artisanal mining sites in Ghana's Eastern Region in March 2010 to collect more information about artisanal mining practices and to consider environmental enforcement options on the miners.

Science Libraries in Ghana

18. (SBU) Minister Ayittey noted that her ministry was preparing a written proposal regarding the establishment of three modern science libraries in Ghana, to help encourage an interest in science among primary and secondary students, and ultimately help build a strong core of young scientists, technicians and engineers to aid in the country's development. She expressed hope that the U.S. would be able to support the initiative. The Ambassador said the embassy would consider the initiative once the written proposal was ready, and noted that the idea might be of interest to the Carnegie Foundation, or another U.S. NGO active in library and educational public-private partnerships.

COMMENT

19. (SBU) Ghana's quick association with the Copenhagen Accord and preparation of a low carbon growth plan clearly demonstrates that the country is positioning itself in the vanguard of African states on climate change issues. Ghana will also play a useful role in encouraging others within the Africa Group and AU to associate with the Accord. The suggestion of an envoy, such as Kofi Annan, to drum up support for the Accord within Africa, is also worth serious consideration by the UNFCC Secretariat in Bonn.

TEITELBAUM